

Fishers of Men

BY

THE

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PREFACE.

These are notes put together in Talbot House in Poperinghe, during my time in the Old House with Padre G. H. Woolley, V.C., in the summer of 1931. They are addressed, audaciously enough, to my fellow-servants in Toc H, and especially to those clergy and ministers of religion who are sharing the pastoral responsibility for the Movement. The Padres now serving with units of Toc H number twelve hundred, of whom some twenty are specially seconded by their respective Churches for wholetime work in Toc H. Both numbers must increase, if the Movement is to grow, not only in good will, but as a school of holiness.

I have not laboured to adapt my thinking to every type of Church inheritance; nor do these notes endeavour to declare the deeper dividends, which are not rare in any real unit of Toc H. A Christian Movement mainly among young men, which is—in a decade of civilian growth—said to be producing one-third of the Ordinands of the Church of England, and many for other Churches; which brings to their Communion, without denominational confusion, thousands of members mainly upon week-days; which has spread like a tide of joy and health to cities, towns, and villages throughout and beyond the Empire; would count its achievements loss, if men's lives were not won.

T.

FISHERS OF MEN.

THE OLD HOUSE

IN POPERINGHE.

My Brothers,

Imagine what it means to me to be here, writing to you ; of whom a hundred seniors were here in sterner days. Some of you were first Called in Talbot House to seek the Ministry. All of you know it, after the flesh or the spirit ; wherever we are working, we turn our faces hitherward. My pen halts at this point, refusing to luxuriate in feeling ; or to " sell rhetoric," Augustine's searching phrase. Better for us to ponder the true significance of that old Latin prayer, which describes the priest looking deep into his duty :

" O sacerdos quid es ? . . . Quid es ergo ?
Nihil et omnia."

I. MEN'S WILLS.

A favourite collect asserts that God " alone can order our unruly wills and affections." Let us think first of all of men's wills, for it is towards their wills that Toc H, if rightly guided, directs its attack.

Nothing distinguished Jesus more than the fact that He woke everyday with a willingness to offer all He had and all He was to the service and glory of the Father. Nothing by contrast is more grave in the present condition of Christianity than the slight emphasis which it lays upon the submission of the will to God ; for the submission of the heart may all too easily come and go. Some may remember a most

significant sentence in one of Oswin Creighton's letters from Flanders, in which he quotes his conversation with an outstandingly fine man who had come home from a long period of solitude up-country in the Argentine. Creighton had suggested that many Church reforms of this and that kind would result from the war. This man replied that they were all secondary by comparison with the root fact that men's wills are so weak !

When we turn to the evening prayer of Robert Louis Stevenson, familiar in this old Upper Room, we find the phrase : " Frustrate the evil wills of men, and in all of good further their endeavours." It was the evil wills of men which made the tragedy of war. Those evil wills could not be met, except by a will to good more stubborn than themselves. The strength there was in good was the first great lesson for the *Student in Arms* ; that strength was sought here, found here, by thousands of ordinary men. They came to Christ in Flanders impotent to go another yard, to last another hour. Christ viewed them very deeply, and asked them were they willing ? If so, He healed them of their self-despair ; and gave them, not security, but more abundant life.

So in Toc H to-day we who are Ministers of Christ must never be content to touch the heart alone. We must be specialists, but not specialists in hearts. Sometimes, both with ourselves and with the men and youngsters, we are too prone to use the stethoscope when we really need to use the stick. We must not

let men's wills lapse on the road behind them ; nor must we leave the jobmasters to challenge them unaided. Conversion seldom begins through coaxing. We must say stern things quietly.

II. THE MINISTRY IS NOT AN EIGHT-HOUR DAY.

If the will is the true point of attack towards the men, the Padres must not live to please themselves. "Take heed to yourselves and to your flock." That is the order in which good heed is taken. Our own wills must come first ; we must steel the habit of our minds to recognise the full significance of the most common apostolic word concerning our position. This is the one word, "*doulos*." Not a servant, but a slave ; a worker without contract, without any reward except by the grace and by kindness of his Master ; a creature born to strict and humble obedience, devoid of any leisure belonging to himself ; if idle, not dismissed, but scrapped as a sham tool. Dwell on this word, "slave," and awe comes back to you, the deepest need of our lives as Ministers.

In Toc H, our personal fidelity must bear the closest scrutiny. If, indeed, no man can be a hero to his own valet, a Padre of Toc H must so conduct his life that it must ring true to every Marksman and to every member. These men are not censorious. They will make excuses for us frequently, and judge us in some things with too large a tolerance ; but none of them can excuse laziness in their Padres. Slackness or insincerity are terrible to them. Here is a memory of some such terror. In one dark week of 1917, four

deserters on four succeeding days gave themselves up to me within this house, hoping that I might save them. The Minister who neglects his calling is a deserting officer.

The Ministry, again, is not a trade from which the clock-face frees us. We of Toc H can never be unready or indifferent. Padres must be holy and humble men of heart—the two words come naturally together, like modesty and courage. The hero always minimised ; that was the way of him. We, too, must school ourselves in humility, if we would seek courage at its source, and share it with our men. Christ and the English are at least at one in their disgust at self-esteem, and in their love of self-belittlement. We must make this our motto : “ So little done, so much to do.” And when we have done all we can, we still must say, “ We are unprofitable servants.” Our best is as brittle as glass.

III. THE MINISTRY OF CHEERFULNESS.

None the less, we must be cheerful, and cheerfulness is closely linked with courage. This does not necessarily mean that we must be amusing upon all occasions. Sometimes we shall do wisely to remember that amusement is poor pasture for the spiritually starving. Yet cheerfulness with strangers is generally good. Our Lord so practised it, and almost always thought it best to sound the note of encouragement when He drew near to men. “ Don’t be afraid, or uneasy, or constrained,” He would say. “ Troubles are not defeats. Lift up your hearts. All hail.”

IV. THE MINISTRY OF WELCOME.

Again, the Padre must be "*philoxenos*"; we've got no word for that. Let me "say it with flowers." Toc H began with Flanders Poppies, but its future symbol should be the Clematis, more widely known by that most English title of "Travellers' Joy." Toc H will hold its men, if it remains indubitably loyal to strangers and wins the blessings of the wayfarer. Spare meals, spare beds are vital to its character. The member is never more true to his Master than when compelling a stranger to come in.†

V. THE MINISTRY OF PATIENCE.

Beware of catching men, and boasting you have caught them. There is a type of fisherman, beloved by comic papers, whose prodigies of skill are always in the past and always measured with extended arms. He is more often seen inside the "Fisherman's Rest" than by the river. We who at best have toiled by night and caught little, must rather cultivate the patience of Job. And is it not significant that Job should spell his name precisely as we spell our daily duty. Every real job needs Job's own patience.

VI. OUR METHODS CONVERSATIONAL.

Now, when we come to grips with the nature and method of ministry in our Movement, we find it to be a Chaplaincy in which companionship and conversation play a peculiar part. There never was a pulpit in this Upper Room; and nothing is more indicative of the strength which has flowed from it than the

† A poor pilgrim overwhelmed by the simple kindness shown him in a humble guest house, asked one of the Brethren why so much love had been shown him. The monk told him to look at the first sentence of the fourth paragraph of the sixth chapter of the Rule of St. Benedict. This was what he found:—

"Every person of whatever degree admitted to this house in the quality of a guest is to be treated as though he were the Lord Jesus Christ Himself."

absence of oratorical powers in all its clerical interpreters. The whole immense expansion, which looks towards this Flemish hop-loft as its Bethlehem, owes nothing to gifts of eloquence.

VII. YET PROPHETS WILL BE NEEDED IN TOC H.

We should do ill-service to the future, not to hope that a true school of prophets may ultimately emerge in Toc H. Preaching, like other arts, is easily despised by those who have small aptitude for its pursuit. We may be very sure that when the Revival really comes, it will be served by teams of out-door preachers. Let none of us meanwhile surrender to sour grapes, condemning preaching for the inward reason that we cannot ourselves achieve it. One of the senior Padres, who was the closest friend of Geoffrey Studdert-Kennedy, would tell you of the peculiar pains which lay behind Geoffrey's fire and spontaneity. Up to the end he wrote each word he uttered for almost every meeting. Even the asides and jests and interludes were in his manuscripts. He had perfected the art of reading as if he spoke carelessly, and disciplined his Irish eloquence by holding himself back from unprepared assertions. His luggage was all books, and every train his study. He read the opposing side with fearlessness and frank appreciation. A man who so behaves will never lack men listeners.

Yet is it gravely true that many men whom God would have as priests stand back because of preaching. The pulpit and its customary duties deter them from the Ministry to which their humbleness and sanctity

would be a precious boon. The days will surely come when no one will expect the parish priest to climb the pulpit stairs so constantly as now. Men gifted for this work must have especial training, and leave the pastor freer to visit, to guide, to lead the people's worship.

VIII. WE LOOK TOWARDS ST. MARTIN.

Meanwhile, within Toc H our task differs both from that of the parish priest and of the preacher. We are the first-fruits in the new age of an Order more ancient than St. Benedict, and far earlier than the parochial plans of Archbishop Theodore. Chaplains, both in name and office, are descended from the group of men, both priests and deacons, who, with lay brothers, too, guarded outside the Gates of Rheims the other half of the cloak of St. Martin of Tours. This tiny settlement was naturally at first concerned to Christianise the Roman troops stationed or on the march. Then, when the Legions melted and the Empire broke up, they turned to serve the wayfarers and to consecrate their journeyings. Next came the founding of the picked training camp at Ligugé, whence men went out in teams composed most carefully to Christianise the Northern Tribes.† The *Capellani* disappeared in the Dark Ages, but not because they failed.

But in mediæval times the constructive genius of St. Martin was forgotten. The parish priests on the one side, and the enclosed religious Orders on the other, jealously shared the field. The regulars and the

† St. Ninian was an early British pupil at Liguge; and *Candida Casa* at Whithorn, in Galloway, was one of several Culdee Schools for training teams of men on the same lines. (Vid. Archibald Scott, *The Pietish Church and Nation*).

seculars were both ill-disposed towards the operations of bodies of men, apparently vagrant and opportunist. St. Francis and his Friars were none the less a graft upon the stock of St. Martin's *Capellani*. Every cross-road became their preaching place, and every form of man's daily work their ample opportunity.

IX. THE PATHOS OF THE PARISH SYSTEM.

If the parish system, when assisted by a vast array of great religious Orders, needed this surprising supplement, our need to-day is infinitely greater. The Churches have inherited the present parochial machinery not from the Gospels, but from a period when England had a tiny population deep-rooted in its soil. It is no disrespect to the parochial system to recognise that the conditions which gave it birth have passed away completely. The pathos of the present is that throughout the country all Ministers are pledged to operate this patchwork of antiquated machinery, year in, year out, with no alternative. Some of them break their hearts, as the conviction grows that they are losing ground, tied to the piteous task of filling pews which are themselves a legacy from ages of compulsion and convention, now happily departed; of preaching to the sermon-dried and soothing storms in tea-cups. The world which has come to be, goes on its way scarce knowing that the Church is meant for more than for the few who seem to share such tender tastes. The Church is seldom opposed; it is more often ignored. The Benches of Bishops, Houses of Convocation, and National Assemblies, together with their counterparts in the other Churches, are to the

world of commerce little more than a bowl of goldfish in a counting-house ; it has no *raison d'être*, and those who watch its goggle-eyed occupants swim round and round interminably, are loitering unduly.

X. MEN RECOGNISE REALITY.

Per contra, it is true that every living Church which girds its loins to serve, can count to-day as much as ever on men's sympathies. No Church which is the channel of genuine love will find the public altogether heedless. The Booths, and the Carliles, the hospitals, and the thousand other agencies which seek to serve the poor, afford indisputable evidence that the quality of mercy remains. The pity is that while the Church inspires so many of the workers, and incites so many of the gifts, it is (in public thought) increasingly remote from service to the suffering, and to the destitute. The Church must never lose its transcendent right to be regarded as the great Hospital of Humanity.

XI. THE CHURCH, A SCHOOL OF SERVICE.

In Toc H, therefore, we must try to reconnect, in ways that cannot be mistaken, the Church's love of God and the code of helpfulness. It is worth while remembering that the early Church, as it came from the moulding of the hands of the Apostles, insisted with an unexampled rigour upon a period of at least two years for its catechumens prior to Baptism ; and, during these two years, the corporal works of mercy were taught and practised as earnestly as the great heavenly doctrines. For the first year, the candidate

took as his primal principle the Fatherhood of God, and learnt to prove it in acts of charity. This was not all. In the year that followed, he studied the redeeming love of Christ, and sought to play his part in work that was redemptive. The early Church was never satisfied with mere subscription to a credal formula. It closely questioned conduct ; and barren orthodoxy found no promise of salvation.

We cannot, in a moment of time, reverse within the Church itself the slipshod methods which it has inherited ; but in *Toc H* we are handling a hopeful instrument, which will grow fruitful or futile, according to our care or carelessness in picking and in training the incoming recruits.

XII. ANTICIPATE THE GOOD IN MAN.

Yet, with all discrimination, we Padres must be particularly generous in our judgments. It was a habit with Our Lord to anticipate a kindly nature in men, and thus to prompt the proof of it.

His followers plainly discovered that trait in the character of Christ. A perfect instance of its application in the New Testament narrative occurs in the first interview between Saul, blind and broken, led from the Damascus Road to the street called Straight, and therein to the house of Ananias. Here before Ananias stands the Master's most relentless foe, pleading to be received within the Christian family. He seems to be sincere ; but every instinct of caution must have been aroused by his arrival. Yet in one

word—the first he utters—Ananias accepts Saul's statement as the truth. Ananias anticipates his Baptism and calls him "Brother Saul." Who can now measure how the title "Brother," so strange as yet and utterly unearned, affected Paul's whole life? It was his very baptism in Christian courtesy. Win men by trusting them.

XIII. FAILURE MUST NOT DISCOURAGE.

When, as will often happen, we find ourselves let down by men we have trusted, we shall be sharers in an experience to which Christ was no stranger. God is provoked every day by many such, and yet remains both strong and patient with men. To be let down by those we have endeavoured to help should make us more aware of what our own daily defections must mean to Him. The power of being pained is meant to show itself, and may recall the truant to try again. But seeming to be pained is a dull affectation which never won a soul.

XIV. WE MUST MAKE WAR ON EVIL.

At tense times, I have thought that we should not be wrong in harbouring as Ministers of Christ a certain thought of vengeance. Our adversary, Evil, is now and then caught sight of in the open. We, who have seen the victims of evil, cannot finesse or hesitate. He is a deadly foe, the source of every sorrow since the world began. With him no truce can hold, no parley can take place. He it is who has dragged down to some fearful fall man after man, and leader after leader.

This solemn Upper Room looks out upon a Flanders plain once desolate beyond description, now smiling through its scars. Nature has healed her wounds ; and a man to-day might pass across the belt of twenty miles, remaining unaware that any war had happened. All other costs are obliterated, except the single fact of death itself, as witnessed by a multitude of stones, nameless and named.

In England also there are old battlefields. No less than thirty-seven crossed swords are marked on the English map, and woven into the last nine hundred years of history. Agony and fruitlessness are gone from them. They serve to lead our minds to men's capacity for loving a cause to the death. Men once convinced will throw away their lives sooner than let what they believe to be wrong triumph without a struggle. We must transcribe this passion into our work with men. "Be in earnest," said Wesley. Sharpen your spirit for an hour a day.†

XV. YET WE MUST NOT BE ILLIBERAL.

Yet, while we are to cultivate a deepened sense of the sternness of our enterprise, we shall most wisely pray that we may not be led into a narrow and illiberal attitude, unbalanced or censorious in temper. None called Our Lord a fanatic ; and those who knew Him best noted a native gaiety, which in some precious phrases stands beckoning within the Gospels. Jesus on every side, at every turn, astonished friend and foe by His most liberal outlook. No phrase more often graced His conversation than "Let it be," or "Let

†The League of the Lamp of Maintenance deserves at least the study of all Padres. Many are thankful for these straight, deep, Rules.

this thing go on," "Forbid it not," "Do not discountenance the use of My Name, however unauthorised, however imperfectly My mission in its fullness is understood." Ponder a dozen dialogues, wherein His followers are far more strict than He; where they would launch God's vengeance, and He will not; where they would disown the imitator, or check the sufferers coming, or stand between the tired Lord and the intrusive children; and it will always seem that His habitual tolerance of everything but evil is something He would teach them every day. It may not be too bold to fancy that the crowd about the Cross gave back to Him a word which had become associated in their minds with the whole character of the Crucified, when they said, "Let it be."

Few Ministers have learnt to let their souls possess this liberal outlook, without surrendering that which He held sacred, the habit of undeviating faith. It is a tragedy indeed that ministerial minds should think to do Him service by being either narrow on the one side, or vacillating on the other. His spirit was intense, unalterably certain; yet He would not condemn the tiniest particle of truth, though mixed with so much error. He loved to recognise sincerity, wherever it shone out, remote though it might be, as a signal from the other little ships to be assembled beneath the Admiral's flag.

XVI. WE MUST BE FAITHFUL STEWARDS OF OLD AND NEW.

We shall be gravely guilty if we spurn the ways of Christian work and of Christian worship which

we ourselves have not experienced. The need to-day is neither solely for tradition, nor solely for experiment; both must be balanced in a faithful ministry. Surely no man can hold that methods which failed to Christianise a mediæval age are likely now to win the world of men; but no man, however modern, can be so stupid as to regard the witness of the past as unimportant. Out of the treasure house of Christian history we must with reverence draw the deep solemnities; but we must recognise that man is on the march, and that the methods of our Ministry must never halt behind him. To worship ancient nets will never mend them; to trawl the shallows of our present pews will break our hearts in vain. Launch out. Find more men friends. Listen to what they say.

XVII. THE EVER-READY MINISTRY.

We must relearn that sublime opportunism which in the Gospels and in the Acts, and in the *gesta Christi* ever since, has siezed upon the unexpected as given by God to test our readiness. The treasurer of Candace was surprised when Philip made his chariot a vehicle of Christian instruction, and a wayside stream the means of Baptism. We do not read that this important convert became an active link with Ethopia. He simply passed from view, bearing upon his brow the secret benediction of the Christ.

I cannot but compare a single incident which recently occurred in an overseas Mark, where two men shared a room, a veteran Christian and an honest

Pagan. Their friendship first established, they came to deeper things and prayed together. On the last night on which the Christian man was to be there before he went up-country, he challenged his friend (who had never been baptised) with words like these : "I can't bear to think of going off tomorrow and leaving you a heathen in status, when I know you are no longer one in heart. The New Testament says somewhere, 'Here is water, who forbids that you should be baptized?' and I say that to you." So saying, he took a flower-bowl from the mantelpiece and poured some water in, prayed with the man, baptised him, and left him the next day, reporting what he had done to the local Clergy.

However strange this sounds, let it not seem a great liberty for a true man to take. The House in question has as yet no resident Chaplain.

XVIII. CHURCH-BUILDINGS ARE NOT EVERYTHING.

"But can I be a Priest, minus a Church to fill?" †

Churches were not built for several centuries after the Church began. The Roman Empire was not won for Christ by parishes and abbeys and cathedrals; worship was in the homes and by the rivers, instruction in the bye-ways, and sermons in the market places. The whole tremendous growth took place without a single dedicated building. The buildings now bequeathed to us, however fair and precious, are, therefore, not the instruments with which the world was won. They represent a late stage in a partial

† Area whole-time Padres of Toc H hold their Weekday Celebrations in the Chapels of their Mark-houses. On Sundays they assist the parish clergy.

victory, a means (unprophesied in the New Testament) of enshrining mysteries then practised in the homes of believers, until the persecutions drove them into more secret meeting-places. The circumstances that we must face to-day render it very certain that to confine our efforts within church-buildings is to desert the field where Christ would see us striving. The homes must be re-won, reconsecrated with gatherings for prayer and sacrament in common living-rooms. The Gospel must again go forward in earnest conversation everywhere. The offices and workshops, the pavements, wharves, and the mills, must hear again of Jesus from His friends.

XIX. THE "EISHOLIC" CHURCH.

To-day no religious word is more debated within the present circles of Christian people than the word "Catholic." Its use has strangely altered since its first introduction, when the great Roman Church refused to countenance this Eastern innovation.† This is no place for any assessment of its true significance ; but remember that when we use the word, we are not using a Gospel word at all. The nearest words upon the lips of Christ are similar, but not identical ; for we are told that He spoke of the Gospel reaching out into the whole world (*eis holon*). This surely meant that it would become our Christian duty, not only to baptise the individual, but to baptise the avenues and ways of common life, the culture and the labour of the nations, the spirit and the outlook of the people. All Church work which leaves businesses unexplored, hotels and shops, libraries and theatres, to go their

† Dr. Swete's *Apostolic Creed*, p. 74, shows that the word "Catholic" was avoided by the early Roman Church. It occurs in no Western Creed till 450 A.D.

pagan ways, is less than catholic. Clergy who don't like ordinary men, who don't go out to win them in all weathers, cannot be catholic through minor practices ; for He Himself has warned us that no claim to worship without expansive work will be enough. Solemn indeed is the picture He has drawn of those who think to claim His mercy for no other reason than that they have fed at His table ; or that their lives have been passed in pleasant proximity to sacred places ; to these He prophesies the terrible reply that they are strangers to Him.

XX. MEN ARE GOD'S NEED.

We must indeed take heed unto ourselves and to our flocks. We must return from trifles which in their utmost bulk can never constitute the vital issues of man's Salvation. We must with tears regain the road whereby the Church of God may daily add from the wide field of working human life men won outright, bringing their rough-hewn courage with them. We that are now the Church's officers attribute our delays to many different causes. Each of these may be true, and many are urgent ; but truth and urgency supremely meet in the one straight necessity that men themselves—not women, boys or girls, not sick or aged people, but men at their full height of energy and purpose—must be re-harnessed. There has never been an age of great revival which has not first begun with some strange stir among a group of ordinary men. All preparation for the Ministry is secondary beside the agony which brings this truth into view

as paramount. We are ordained as fishers among men, rather than as mere shepherds. He who commissions us is in a certain aspect highly austere. He will not be contented by any substitution we may offer. It is not enough to dominate the feelings of a child, to teach where none can question. This will but feed the pagan world with new supplies of very junior victims for the process of disenchantment. We must go straight for men, where we can find them ; they are out of earshot now, through small fault of their own.

XXI. THE PADRES AS PIONEERS.

What shall the verdict be ? That the Church lost in the ensuing years the ground it sought to gain in the years of war ? We did not then regard the Ministers who left their parishes to live alongside men and study them, sharing their common life, as indolent or unessential. The men of England did not think so of them ; and we indeed do ill to discontinue the studies and friendships they began. They saw our race of men as none have seen it ; they looked upon them with new admiration, with hope and patience, too. They watched and dealt with them in every turn of duty, in every type of suffering ; they came to love them, and their love was not infrequently returned. Would not these chaplains look with regretful eyes upon the era of internal reaction which has recalled the Church to lesser aims ? Would they not urge that men are worth more study, and that the Church which wakens to an assault on man is doing its Master's will more faithfully than by all other aims

and occupations? No Church is rich in men. Some parishes behave as if no men lived inside their borders; some colleges for training Ministers teach little about men, preferring easier topics.

Are we to lose the way beyond recall? Or are we to embrace this stern issue, and turn our minds to men and to their needs, to their sorrow, their successes, their despairs, to their native unconsecrated virtues, their huge temptations, their delinquencies? Are we to take for priests any who do not care to study men and serve them? Are we content to frame the structure of church life upon a basis and in an atmosphere which men can scarcely share without a sense of being less than manly? Are we prepared to let the men remain like the poor unchurched sinners of the Gospels, a mass of humankind confessedly remote from organised religion, absent because unwanted?

XXII. DUCTOR DUBITANTUM.

Or are we patiently to turn our steps towards a new (or very old) conception that the Church of England is at its very source a perpetual mission to the men of England? Are we to go amongst them studiously, inviting them to teach us and to help us; holding up to their minds the truth that they should change their thinking about God and think new thoughts of Him, no longer obscure thoughts implanted by our old inadequate interpretations. How can we help them in their unbelief? Unbelief in men may well be treated homeopathically. Men are often

kept from faithful Christianity by thinking that we believe far more than they, when often their unhappy intellectual shoe pinches at some queer point, which our more polished footwear fits more elegantly. Stand in their shoes awhile, review these twenty years of war and peace, of politics and industry, depression and bad housing, triumph of rogues, and honesty gone bankrupt, huge and inhuman combinations, few chances anywhere at home and troubles overseas—then face the paradox of God the Father, and you will find the faith of men is after all amazing.

The Church of England, in the providence of God, is now to face an age in which the race which shares its name has a profoundly different part to play from its historic role in earlier periods. No longer as indisputable masters of overseas and foreign situations; no longer as the one Imperial people; no longer with monopolies in commerce, or riches inexhaustible; the English must go forward to their duty more humbly than of old. How can the Church most prudently expand its own reduced resources? What are the wisest ways of Church incidence upon the common life and daily occupations of the people? How can it best stand beside to strengthen and encourage them? How can it prove itself sublimely sensitive, unalterably—though not exclusively—attached to British manhood, for better for worse, for richer for poorer? There are a hundred ways to be explored. One at least is Toc H. "God," says an ancient proverb, "hangs great weights upon odd wires."

XXIII. HOW HE BEGAN WITH MEN. HE OFTEN EVOKED THEIR HELP.

To leave the issue here is as impossible as it would be to prophesy the steps which God will take to call men to return. What steps did Jesus take in the Gospels to deal with men especially ?

Nothing can be so fruitful to the man working among men as a steady study of Our Lord's own methods. At the outset it may be imagined that the Son of God would invariably employ His sublime powers to purchase men's gratitude by an act of beneficence towards them. Yet this is not by any means the upshot of the Gospels ; and, when we remember that the earliest Gospel is greatly concerned with the record of Our Lord's miracles, and is far too short to deal with ordinary incidents where His miraculous powers were held in reserve, it is all the more striking to discover that in a considerable number of cases Our Lord's first angle of approach to men emphasised the expression of His need, not theirs.

We all know some self-sufficient characters, admirable no doubt in pertinacity and strength, who refuse under any circumstances to be beholden to others. This, however, was far from being the habit of Our Lord's own mind. As His ministry develops, it becomes customary with Him to express wants which require a response.

It is, indeed, not only gratitude that makes a convert. A deeper mode of conversion comes

through the discovery that something can be supplied which will win the Lord's own thanks. This posture of request for infinitely simple things, requiring not money but willingness, is a part of His method, and a deep feature of His diplomacy. To call it an opening move on the chess-board of conversation would be to imply a certain element of insincerity, which was certainly never present; yet we should do ill to ignore the truly surprising frequency with which recorded dialogues thus open. Zacchaeus never meant, when curiosity induced him to climb the sycamore tree, to propose himself as the host on that occasion. It is his Guest who asks it of him; and the resolution of generous amendment of life which closes the incident, comes from the lips of a man who when he woke that day had no such purpose in mind. "The Lord hath need of them," those two disciples on the first Palm Sunday were instructed to reply, and the Lord's need was talisman enough to one who did not figure openly as His disciple.

It does not therefore harm the Church, but helps it rather, to open out the needs of Christ sometimes before the common gaze. These common men are never common in His discerning sight, and Love is sometimes born in running errands. The Englishman will often stand aloof where there is nothing to be done that he can see, except mere listening to fine phrases, or behaving as if all doubt was at an end. But give him work to do and he may find his soul not hitherto discovered, and be enriched by way of his own chivalry. Let the Church make it clear to men that it has genuine work for them to do, not only pews for them to occupy.

XXIV. HE GAVE HEED TO THEIR MINDS.

In His mission among men Our Lord dispensed with all implements save His Bible ; this He carried in His memory, using it with the joy of a lover and the discernment of a scholar. He was in no way enslaved to the more primitive codes or conceptions which it contained, but like a prudent and wise steward brought forth both new and old. We find Him thus at one point reasserting a fundamental truth and disowning the traditional belittlements with which its simplicity has been disguised and rendered void ; at another, a negative code is halted without hesitation, and a blessed affirmation is given to replace it for all time.

He is never happier than when keenly interrogated ; and His lamp of truth never burns more brightly than when free but reverent thought has been aroused in the minds of His pupils. No class outwears His patience, nor will He raise the siege where stubborn honesty stands to be captured in any city of a man's soul, however unpretentious on the map of influence or world position. Nothing less than conviction will satisfy Him ; nor is there in the Gospels from end to end a single case of surrender, in which conditions are conceded until conquest is complete. The disputant must first become the disciple. Then, when his neck is bowed to receive the yoke, he will discover that it is not grievous. To be prepared for servitude is the preliminary pathway to His further friendship. No self-delusion stands ; He sees through men, yet loves them. Again and again men judge themselves to have been won outright, before the critical conflict

with habit and reaction has begun. He is insistent in urging that emotion may be but an unconscious artifice, behind which the routed forces of self-will regather strength and fatal cohesion. The emptied house unoccupied will attract once more its ancient tenants; and habits of hesitation and compromise may be not dead but sleeping, to awake in cowardly perfidy when some great crisis comes. Judas was such as this.

Yet never was any soul further than His from being unappreciative towards belief, however immature, or trust, however faint. These He received like some Spring flowers found peeping boldly through the Winter of a world, where any faith in things unseen deserves its word of welcome.

Thus, without haste and without remission, with every hindrance made a furtherance of His aim, with every interruption turned to the best account, *sans* books, *sans* tools, the country as His classroom, and every house His workshop, Jesus dispensed the Gospel among men literally like seed that is sown.

My mind goes back to a great constellation of lives which were as lamps set in the darkness; and chief among them are certain of the Padres. †

Rupert Inglis, serving with my own Brigade, went out upon the Somme to bring men in, and brought some in; then went out again and disappeared.

† There is a quaint illusion, sedulously sown in recent Irish reminiscences of the War, that only R. C. Priests lived and died with their men. The Ypres Salient alone contains the bodies of more than one hundred non-Roman Priests and Ministers who had this privilege. It so happens that all Padre recipients of the V.C. were Church of England men.

Hardy†, orphan son of a struggling commercial traveller, perhaps the greatest Chaplain of them all. Dick Dugdale, transferred to win a hostile Colonel. He won him in a month; they died together. These were true priests, true men. The Church scarce knew she held them. Their names are now forgotten, except by a few survivors who learnt Christ's love through them; but many men's hands welcomed them into Paradise.

Two other senior men, one back in Canada, and one in South America, both of them faithful Churchmen, bear names which stand for God's own Fatherhood among a multitude of men by land and on the sea. They may not be well-known in Church Assemblies, in which they have small share. Like lonely lighthouses, their Ministry faces outwards in isolated duty towards men.

Let me end with a gentler instance. A worn-out Canon, the father of an Oxford friend of mine, retired from Rochester to become Master of the Charterhouse. Each morning he walked slowly, taking the air, round Smithfield Market. When he came to die, a crowd of Smithfield porters followed him to his grave. No one expected them. They came because he had conversed with them, day after day, his Prayer-book in his hand. They did not know his name. That did not matter. He had become their Padre, and they followed.

T.

† Rev. T. B. Hardy, V.C., D.S.O., M.C., was educated at the Commercial Travellers' Orphanage.

SIDE-LIGHTS ON TOC H.

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